



ELSAH HISTORY

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No. 97
Spring 2009

Discovering Elsie

The tenth anniversary of Elsie's photography contest

The opening reception for the tenth annual Village of Elsie Photography Exhibit will be on Saturday, July 25, from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. in the museum. The museum is located in the Village Hall, 26 LaSalle Street. Refreshments will be served.

The theme for 2009 is *Discovering Elsie*. We hope you will come and see the photos that have been submitted for judging and exhibition. Janice Nesser-Chu, a photography professor and a working photographer/artist, will again serve as judge.

You may view the exhibit when the museum is open every Friday, Saturday, and Sunday, from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M. The exhibit will close on Sunday, October 18.

In 2008, for the first time, two purchase prizes were awarded, one for the village and one for the surrounding bluff area, including the Principia College campus. The theme was *Colors and Contrasts of Elsie*.

Winners of the 2008 Photo Contest



Brady Kesner's "Flower Box" was awarded the first place purchase prize for the best photograph taken in the village.



Photo at right: Rosemary Towey's "Little House in the Woods" received the first place purchase prize for the best photo taken in the surrounding area.

Special Recognition Recipients of the 2008 Photo Contest



"Redbud and Picket Fence"

by Beverly Bogart



"Principia Overlook"

by Kay Wood

The Village of Elsah Photography Exhibit began in 2000 with a four-day show, from July 13 to July 30, with no particular theme. The next year, 2001, a theme was added: *Photography and the Creative Eye*. In 2002, a purchase prize and an outside judge were added. The latest change was made in 2008, aimed at recognizing the entire corporate limits of the Village—the valley and the surrounding bluffs. Each year the contest has been unique and interesting.

Previous themes and purchase prize winners: 2001: *Photography and the Creative Eye* (exhibit only); 2002: *Connections with the Past*, Errol Campbell, "Elsah Gateway Circa 1950;" 2003: *Elsah: To Every Season*, Gretchen Batz, "Walking with Love;" 2004: *Elsah Magic*, George Cooke, "Strolling Mill Street;" 2005: *In and Out: Elsah's Unexpected Treasures*, Robert Koch, "Rectangles with Hobbyhorse;" 2006: *Elsah Close Up*, Barbara Bagby Zimmerman, "White Rockers;" 2007: *Elsah: People and Places*, Ben Johnson, "Elsah's Historic Methodist Church "

Book and Bake Sale

Saturday, October 17, is the date for the museum's Book and Bake Sale. The time will be from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.. Donations of used books and fresh baked goods will be gratefully accepted

Please deliver your fresh baked goods to the museum any time after 11:00 A.M.. on Saturday, October 17. Starting now, you may bring books to the museum any Friday, Saturday, or Sunday from 1:00 to 4:00 P.M.. We cannot accept textbooks, National Geographic magazines, or Reader's Digest books.

The bake sale will be one day only. The book sale will continue on days the museum is open through Saturday, October 31 when the museum closes for the season.

All proceeds will be used for the Museum Conservation and Exhibit Fund.

The Village Museum is jointly maintained by the Village of Elsah and Historic Elsah Foundation. Members of the museum committee are: Marge Doerr, Inge Mack, Marie Oleson, Jane Pfeifer, Jim Schmidt, Mary Anne Schmidt, and Lynn Schreiber.

Elections and Appreciation

This spring the Village of Elsau elected a new mayor, Lynn Schreiber; a new clerk, Cindy Ira; and a new member to the Board of Trustees, Steve Ira. Ann Modak and Mike Pitchford were re-elected as trustees. Before the election the out-going mayor appointed Eric Schreiber as treasurer. Sue Palmer has been appointed trustee by the new mayor and will join the board in July. Continuing board members are Mark Badasch and Merlin Lewis.

Retiring officers: Marge Doerr, mayor; Jeri Lewitz, clerk; and Linda Bohaker, treasurer.

Cy Bunting serves as chair of the Zoning Board. Members of that board are Paula Bradley, Inge Mack, Bob Phillips, and Sandy Stack. Roy Coffman also served until his passing last March.

Historic Elsau Foundation hosted a reception in Farley's Music Hall in May to express appreciation for the outgoing officers and to welcome in the new ones.

Elsah's new officers...



Mark Badasch, Sue Palmer, Cindy Ira, Ann Modak, Steve Ira, Eric Schreiber (back), Lynn Schreiber (front), Merlin Lewis, Mike Pitchford.

All photos on this page by Marie Oleson

Thank you... we are grateful for your service to this community!!!

Elsah's mayors...



Lynn Schreiber (2009 -); Marge Doerr (2001-2009), Jane Pfeifer (1984 - 2001)

Out-going, in-coming, and continuing officials...



Mark Badasch, Jeri Lewitz, Linda Bohaker (back), Ann Modak (front), Cindy Ira, Lynn Schreiber, Merlin Lewis, Marge Doerr, Mike Pitchford.

Members who have served at any time on either the Board of Trustees or the Zoning Board...



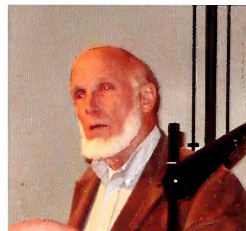
Lynn Schreiber, Mark Badasch, Cy Bunting, Marge Doerr, Eric Schreiber, Merlin Lewis, Ann Modak, Ned Bradley, Linda Bohaker, Eric Mack, Mike Pitchford, Cindy Ira, Inge Mack, Paula Bradley, Jerry Taetz, Jane Pfeifer, Ed Lewitz, Steve Ira, Jeri Lewitz, Jim Schmidt, Ken Deal.

Sundown Towns

Just what is a Sundown Town? Last January James W. Loewen, author of the recently published book *Sundown Towns: A Hidden Dimension of American Racism*, answered that question during a talk he gave at Principia College. Principia and Historic Elsah Foundation invited selected guests to meet with Dr. Loewen at a dinner prior to the event. The talk was well attended by members of the college community and residents of the Village of Elsah.

The term “sundown town” is attributed to signs that many towns posted warning minority groups (usually, but not always, African-American) that they had better not let the sun set on them in that town. In addition, Dr. Loewen defines a sundown town as “...any organized jurisdiction that for decades kept African-Americans or other groups from living in it and was thus ‘all-white’ on purpose.”

This practice was widespread in the Midwest, starting about 1890, and in many cases continues to this day. To Dr. Loewen’s surprise, his research uncovered 501 sundown towns, and Elsah was one of them.



James W. Loewen

Photo: Amber Dahlin

No evidence of this practice was found during a thorough search of Elsah’s written ordinances, but residents living here during that period carry memories that support this allegation. When Principia College moved to Elsah in the early 1930s it hired African-American workers. To avoid any possibility of confrontation with village residents, Principia purchased a station wagon to transport these employees to and from Alton and St. Louis each day. In today’s mental climate where the desire to eradicate any and all forms of racial prejudice and hatred lives in most human hearts, it is difficult to understand the influences that shaped the policies and politics of the early twentieth century.

The book *Sundown Towns* is interesting and readable. Dr. Loewen is a professor emeritus of sociology at the University of Vermont. He has written several books, including *Lies My Teacher Told Me* and *Lies Across America: What Our Historic Sites Get Wrong*.

Elsah’s Postmaster Retires

Yvonne Hayes, Elsah’s postmaster since 2000, retired from the United States Postal Service on March 31. After nine years of serving our community, Yvonne is now spending more time with her children and grandchildren. She and her husband Roger sold their home in Alton and moved to Granite City to be close to family and friends.



Yvonne Hayes

Photo: Marie Oleson

Yvonne has a daughter Heather who is married to Brad, and they have two daughters, MaKayla and Ashlynn. Yvonne also has a son Jeffrey, married to Jamie, and they have two children, Ryan and Morgan.

Yvonne’s career with the Postal Service began in 1983. Before coming to Elsah she worked for the USPS in Granite City, Illinois, and Creve Coeur and Hazelwood, Missouri, with a brief stint with the Department of Defense.

Yvonne was the guest of honor at a farewell pot-luck dinner in Farley’s Music Hall, hosted by village resident Bob Wilson. Everyone wishes Yvonne many happy years of retirement. We also hope she will continue to pursue her interest in photography as she is a talented photographer.

Remembering Friends



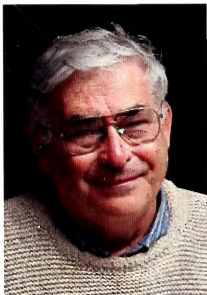
Helen Andrews graduated from Principia College in 1938 and remained an active member of the Principia community until her passing in April. Helen was the first lady of Principia during the years her husband, David K. Andrews, served as its president. Also a devoted supporter of the Elsah community, Helen was a member of Historic Elsah Foundation from the time of its establishment in 1971.



Roy Coffman, owner of Elsah's Green Tree Inn, passed away in March. Roy and his wife, Brenda, purchased the Green Tree Inn and moved to Elsah from Phoenix, Arizona, in 2006. Roy was active in Christian publishing and trained Christians around the world in the business of publishing. He was also interested in helping others along the path of spiritual growth. He served as an area director for Special Olympics and enjoyed playing tennis and fly fishing. The Coffmans' daughter, Christa Morgan lives with her family in Aurora, New York, and their son Eric lives with his family in Waynesburg, Pennsylvania. Memorial donations may be made to Farley's Roof Fund.



Charlene Wedding passed away in March. Born and raised in Jersey County, Charlene lived for the past five years in Elsah with her daughter and son-in-law, Ellen and Stan Hanold. During and immediately following World War II, Charlene worked in Spokane, Washington, as an air traffic controller and radio operator for Northwest Airlines. She married James Wedding in 1948 and raised two daughters and a son. Her husband passed in 1999.



Paul O. Williams, co-founder with Charles Hosmer of Historic Elsah Foundation, and co-author with Dr. Hosmer of *Elsah: A Historic Guidebook*, passed away in early June. Paul edited and produced the first 26 issues of this newsletter from 1971 through 1978 and he taught English for many years at Principia College before moving to California about 1980 (see *Elsah History* #27 / April 1979). Paul remained very interested in Elsah and HEF right up to the time of his passing. He had many other interests, among which were poetry (including haiku) and science fiction writing (The Pelbar Series).

Report to Members and Friends

The extensive exterior renovation and painting project on Farley's Music Hall is finished!! This included the replacement of water-damaged wood siding, window frames and part of the upstairs bow window. We are deeply grateful to Jason Roloff and his crew for their meticulous workmanship. The final cost for this work totaled \$42,097.26, paid for with savings, fund-raising, and a \$2,000 grant from Landmarks Illinois.



Jason Roloff and his helper, James Bland, hard at work preparing Farley's for a new coat of paint

Photo: Marie Oleson

Receipts from the December 2008 *Home for the Holidays* fund-raiser totaled \$6,243.69. There were three days of private tours and one day when the village was open to the public. We sold 381 tickets over the four days. Homes that were open were those of Ann & Mark Badasch, Noreen & Jim Bayer, Norman Brokaw, Joetta & James Gray, Ellen & Stan Hanold, Cindy & Steve Ira, Ute Levi, Christy & Bob Phillips, Pauline & Mike Pitchford, Dory & Blair Smith, and Sun Smith-Foret. In addition, the two bed-and-breakfast inns and the two churches opened their doors for visitors. A heartfelt thank-you goes to all who have shown their support of HEF and this community.

A new roof for Farley's

For the past few years HEF has been puzzling over what to do with Farley's 100+ year old metal roof, which was installed when the second story was added around 1900. It is rusty around the edges, fragile, and dotted with pinholes. We have tried to find someone to paint it to help prolong its life, but the preparation work needed is extensive, and the metal is not safe to support a person's weight. Also there is no safe place to tie a safety rope. The cost of painting would be a minimum of \$12,000. We have finally come to the conclusion that it would be better to invest in a new roof — a roof that would not need to be painted.

We have decided to establish a fund to raise money for a new roof. The new roof will match the current roof, with the addition of a ridge vent. Initial contributions have come from HEF's Board of Directors, and I am pleased to report that 100% of the Board has personally contributed \$15,500, or 39% of the \$40,000 needed.

We are now asking friends and HEF members to join us and contribute toward this vital project. To date donations to this fund total \$22,970. We send a sincere thank you to those members and friends (listed below) who have contributed so generously.

--Marie Oleson, president

Ann & Mark Badasch*
Noreen & Jim Bayer
Catherine Barlow
Lindell Ann & John Belote
Joy & Tim Booth
Paula & Ned Bradley**
Norman Brokaw
Sue Collesler*
Carole & Robert Craig
Georgia & Richard Dearborn
Marjorie Doerr
Herawati & Eric Gerber
Marjorie & Hank Hamlin
Betsy Holt**
Joyce & Charles Heck
Martha Hufford
Margaret & Andrew Hyde**

Cindy & Steve Ira**
Betty Jean Kistler
Lucian Krukowski
Ute Schweitzer Levi
Jeri & Ed Lewitz**
Inge Mack**
Carol McFall
Eleonore Nelson*
Elizabeth Oleson
Marie & Ole Oleson**
Lorraine & Warren Passmore
Sandra Peterson
Jane & David Pfeifer**
Rosemary & Paul Robinson
Tom Russell
Mary Anne & Jim Schmidt**
Lynn & Eric Schreiber

Charles Sheppard
Jeanne & Gene Shultz
Ann Barnes Simpson
Deborah & Tim Smith**
Gloria Snyder
Gerald Taetz
Rose & Tim Tomlinson**
Karen & Dan Treadwell
Char & Bill Wachtel
Marian Wells
Nancy Wiley
Missy & John Williams
Paul O. Williams
Susan & Mark Young

*a gift of \$500 or more

** a gift of \$1,000 or more

Village Happenings

The village welcomes a new baby: Kathy and Jim Border have an addition to their family; Jake was born February 2, at 7:30 P.M. and is happy and healthy.

Piasa Harbor restaurant and general store closed recently and the property has been purchased by the Great Rivers Land Trust (GRLT) in partnership with Lewis and Clark Community College's National Great Rivers Research and Education Center. The facility is located on the Great River Road just east of Elsah, and is being converted into a river research field station. The new field station will accommodate researchers, educators, visiting scientists, graduate students, and interns. Through ownership or conservation easements, the GRLT protects over 3,000 acres of open space and wildlife habitat along the Mississippi River corridor. The public marina, with 112 boat slips, will remain open, as will the gas station.

Conference: Two of Elsah's newly elected officers, Lynn Schreiber, mayor, and Cindy Ira, clerk, attended an all-day conference for newly elected officials on June 11, at the Rend Lake Conference Center. The conference was sponsored by the Illinois Municipal League for the purpose of improving the understanding of village government.

Village Trees: This spring, AmerenCIPS, our local electric and gas company, trimmed many of Elsah's trees and removed several large trees that were too close to power lines. Hopefully this will reduce power outages when storms sweep the area. Residents were encouraged to plant new trees but they were advised to plant away from wires or to plant small trees. Where significant trees were removed, residents received \$150 from AmerenCIPS for tree replacement.

Post Office Update: Since the retirement of our postmaster, Yvonne Hayes, on March 31, a new postmaster has not yet been named. In the interim Elsah's postal needs are being well taken care of by Dawn Carter who has been doing extra duty pulling weeds and planting flowers, and generally making our Post Office look spiffy and welcoming.

Groceries at Jeremiah's: Jeri Lewitz, owner and proprietor of Jeremiah's-Elsah consignment shop, is also now carrying a limited supply of grocery items for the convenience of village residents. There are things other than emergency items (staples) available. The **Three Rivers Community Garden** is bringing in "extras" on Thursday mornings. **Fazio's** "on the hill" in St. Louis has delivered fresh breads - Italian bread, cranberry bread, croissants & baguettes. **Landshire** provides hearty frozen sandwiches, most of which take just a minute or two to heat in the microwave. And of course there are **Ted Drewes** frozen custard "mini concretes" in various flavors. Also there are ice cream treats, snack foods, and soda pop.

Bob & Christy Phillips move to Peoria: Bob has been appointed by his Bishop to be the directing pastor (senior pastor) of the First United Methodist Church of Peoria. They are keeping their home and expect to retire back to Elsah in (approx.) 7 years. They will be renting their Elsah home but keeping the guest room in the carriage house so they can come back for visits, so you may still see them about the village from time to time

Shortly before his passing, **Paul Williams**, co-founder of HEF, sent a contribution to HEF for the Farley's Music Hall Roof Fund. Along with that donation was a special poem he wrote for the occasion:

If you need a roof,
I will not remain aloof
for it would be a pain
to let in all the rain
on such a special place,
yes, it would be disgrace,
and mould would grow apace,
and rot would come, and mice,
then beetles, spiders, lice,
and other kinds of horror
with time (that great marrer),
yes, the roof must be renewed
before all comes unglued,
Farley's must stay in prime
and stand the test of time.

Paul O. Williams

Responses from our readers

Elsah natives Betty Hopkins and Nancy McDow responded to Eddie Keller's article "The People of Elsah: Elsah in the 1920s and 1930s" in our last newsletter (see *Elsah History* No. 95/96), sharing their memories about certain details related in the article. It's wonderful that people are still around who can remember the '20s and '30s.

From Betty Hopkins:

"My Grandfather Mike Barnal's butcher shop was actually on the lot where Miss Nancy McDow's house is today [29 LaSalle Street]....Thank you for all the work you do for our beloved Elsah."

From Nancy McDow:

"I always understood Mike Barnal's butcher shop was in the building where my house is now" [in the Giberson store, not in the nearby "Robbers' Roost" that once stood on LaSalle Street].

"Also, Muriel Faulkner was Sarah Gill's granddaughter [not her daughter]. Muriel married Nelson Seagraves. Ruth Faulkner was the daughter." [This refers to the house where Marge Doerr lives, at 25 Mill Street.]

"Kate Palmer's place was stated to be where Alice Condit lived [87 Mill Street--home of Janice Neuhaus]. I understood that Kate Palmer's house was at 101 Mill instead [where Jim Hostler lives now]. Cecilia Wendle's family lived there, and later Fred Tilkes' family. He worked at the college in landscaping. Cecilia also stayed and worked at Dick Barnes."

Welcome...

to Brenda and Jack Phillips — 2 Maple Street
to Alison & Bruce Rea — 17 Valley Street

and welcome back...

to Judi & Bob Doerr — 3 Elm Street

Farewell...

...to Erin Fry — 17 Valley Street

and Farewell, but not good-bye...

...to Bob & Christy Phillips — 2 Maple Street

Welcome to new members of HEF: Kathleen Baird, Beverly Bauser, Bill Babcock, Bernardo Brunetti, Beth & Jeff Carey, Terri & Mark Darr, Sue & Jonathan Palmer, Danne & Mike Rhaesa

Historic Elsah Foundation Board:

President	Marie Oleson
Vice President	Paula Bradley
Secretary	Cathy Barlow
Treasurer	Jane Pfeifer
Board members:	
Ann Badasch	Jeanne Shultz
Steve Ira	Gerald Taetz
Jeralyn Lewitz	Tim Tomlinson
Inge Mack	Susan Young
Mary Anne Schmidt	

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Please send memberships or letters to the editor to:

P.O. Box 117, Elsah, IL 62028

The purposes of Historic Elsah Foundation are stated in the Articles of Incorporation (1971):
"...the preservation and enhancement of the historic buildings, houses, architecture and culture of the Village of Elsah, Illinois, the historic areas, the publication of historical brochures, pamphlets, and periodicals regarding the Village, and the establishment of an educational program to inform the general public of the historical and educational value of the Village.